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881 an injunction against eating meat, and this seems to be when the *elima* activities are affecting the hunt and the supply of game.

The rest of the *bamelima* are merely expected to be in attendance, and come and go as they please.

In the very lack of restrictions we can see that the Mbuti do not regard the *bamelima* to be in any ritual condition of danger or impurity. At such times as they are free to be among other band members in the camp they behave perfectly normally, playing with young children, fondling babies, sitting by family hearths, and so forth. But they eat separately and wash separately, so we might say that at least they are in a condition of ritual respect.

881 To begin with, the *bamelima* spend most of their time either inside
• 864 the hut or else off with an instructress, in the forest. Inside the hut
867 they are taught the songs of the *elima* by any older women who care to take part in the instruction. In the forest, I was told by a number of women, young and old, the girls are instructed in the arts of motherhood. This presumably includes such aspects of sexual life as are still unknown to them, which are probably few, but also use of the various herbs and treatments that a woman must know to insure fertility, an abundance of milk, easy childbirth, and abortion if necessary.

881 Girls say that certain of the *elima* songs are taught them in the
533 forest rather than in the hut, and as the festival progresses less and less time is spent in the hut, and more in the forest. For the festival is said "to rejoice the forest," to make it happy and glad. If the girls are not singing well they are told the forest will be displeased. If they are dejected they are asked if they want the forest to be sad. Everyone is expected to be happy, and as the *bamelima* go through the forest they sing to it. As with so many of the other songs of the Mbuti, the *elima* songs are either wordless, being just plays on vowel sounds, or else the words are slight and without any evident significance, such as "Ibu is a dog," "Let's get leaves," and "Oh, the mud!" Other songs sung by the *bamelima* toward the end of the festival, when they sing in public in the camp, are rather different, making rather more sense and being distinctly spicy in nature.

But the songs that are considered as true *elima* songs and which conform to a musical style of their own, are evidently sacred. When they are sung in the forest, they are sung *to* the forest. A phrase is cast at the forest and an echo is awaited before the girls continue. Even an individual girl, usually the one with blood, will sing in this

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ders. Like the "mother," their role is also that of chaperone, however, for the second most important activity, after song, is the selection of and sleeping with lovers.

Sexual experimentation is certainly a major element in the *elima*, but it is combined with a very definite move to widen the social horizons of the girls, and to direct their attentions into what the parental and grandparental generations consider proper directions. There are also certain rules about intercourse in the *elima* hut. The senior girls, or instructors, and the "mother" guide the *bamelima* in all this. Their decisions are never questioned, and never discussed by the rest of the band. It is not until the latter stages of the festival that the parental generation takes an active part in the proceedings.

The widening of horizons is achieved by taking the girls to visit neighboring bands. On such visits they may stay for only a day, or for several nights, depending on whether the girls find suitable lovers. It is considered important by everyone that the *elima* house should be a place of what is best translated as enthusiastic lovemaking. At first it is modest in scale, and, depending on the composition of the band, is likely to take place early on and within the ordinary hunting camp. The boys who will enter the *elima* hut will be the younger ones, not likely to be serious suitors. They may enter only if they are invited by a girl, and the girl is forbidden to invite anyone related to her on her father's side or closely related on her mother's side. Effectively that means any descendant of the father's father or of the mother's mother; the children of any of the father's brothers or sisters or half brothers or half sisters, and the children of any of the mother's full brothers or sisters. Invitation is made by the girl, who whips the boy of her choice. The girls come out of their hut at regular intervals, during the day to begin with, armed with pliable young saplings. They seek out and soundly beat whatever boys lawfully take their fancy, if they can catch them.

Any boy so whipped is under an obligation, whether he likes it or not, to enter the *elima* hut later that day. When he does so he is subject to a further beating by the *bamelima*, and even then may not be invited to sleep with the girl who first selected him. Unless she gives him permission, he may not sleep with her. And if she allows him to lie with her, he again has to have her permission before intercourse can take place. The men say that once they lie down with a girl, however, if they want her they take her by surprise, when petting her, and force her to their will.